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United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.

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REPORT OF EDITORIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR BRIGHAM
TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE
ON THE INFORMATIONAL PROGRAM

Washington, D. C.
April 18 - 22, 1939

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For a period of 25 years, the Agricultural Extension Service of the several States and the United States Department of Agriculture has been engaged in carrying to the farmer and the farm home the results and findings of research in all phases of agriculture and rural life. The Service has attempted to explain the varied programs and movements for the improvement of farm life generally, and has sought to interpret laws, regulations, trends, and efforts having for their ultimate purpose the effecting of a better situation on the farms of the Nation. This has been done through a system of county farm and home agents, specialists, and supervisory officials connected primarily with the Land-Grant Colleges. Field demonstrations, lectures, organized groups, publications, newspaper stories, visual aids, radio, and other media have been used effectively for conveying this information.

The results have been valuable and interesting. Farm folk of today are more thoroughly acquainted with the fundamentals of successful farming and the fine things that follow as a result. The Extension Service has attempted to be exactly what its name implies, and it is a service institution in fact and reality. It has cooperated with various other agencies working with rural people and oftentimes has paramounted the cause of these other agencies above its own. Wholehearted support has in most cases been given to promoting the work of these other agencies, and because the Extension Service has enjoyed the confidence and support of the farming people, it has been able to serve effectively where it might have been difficult for other organizations to have secured similar results.

In the various States, the Extension Editors, cooperating with their associates in the Extension Service, have told the story of an improved farm life, building up confidence in their news and informational reports and in the main "covering" effectively all developments in the field of agriculture. This has meant that those who read have been able to keep up with and take advantage of any new movement or program developed either nationally or locally in the States.

But as the farm and the farm home becomes increasingly of greater national concern, the whole situation becomes more complex. New agencies have been established and they, with the older organizations, have a message of value to the rural people. These agencies have been established to meet an actual need and therefore their messages are of great interest to a large number of people. Press associations, general magazines,

agricultural papers, metropolitan newspapers, and other publications have given much space to the work of these new agencies. The Extension Service, while doing much of the actual work for these agencies, has not attempted to develop an informational service on a national scale. In the States, this informational service has functioned with considerable success, but it has been thought by many of the State Extension editors that the whole field of Extension throughout the United States should be explored and typical results made available to magazines and newspapers of national circulation.

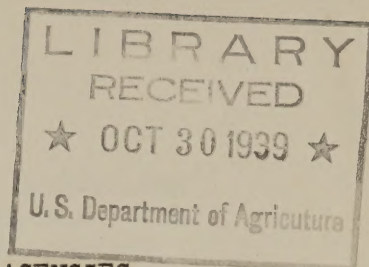
It was thought that this could best be done in the offices of the Federal Extension Service at Washington, where reports and results from all States of the Union are available and might be assembled as they deal with any particular rural problem or accomplishment. It was thought too that perhaps a better coordination of all news stories emanating from Washington and the regional offices of the United States Department of Agriculture might be secured if the matter were carefully studied and recommendations made. Therefore, the suggestion was made that a representative committee of Extension Editors be called to Washington to study the situation and to make any recommendations that would seem wise. This committee was selected on a geographical basis and met in the offices of the Federal Extension Service, April 18. After considerable discussion and consultation, the committee adopted the reports of two subcommittees appointed on the first day.

These reports are submitted herewith as the viewpoint of the committee and in the hope that they shall receive careful consideration so that the whole program of informational work in agriculture might function without prejudice and in fairness to all, including the agencies of the Department of Agriculture, the Land-Grant Colleges and their extension services, the informational outlets, and the reading public.

Frank Jeter, Extension Editor, North
Carolina, Chairman of Editorial Committee.

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REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

This report is designed primarily as a statement of the broad principles of information relationships of Federal and State Extension Services and other agencies. Editors are urged to put these principles into effect by establishing and maintaining closer relationships with regional and State representatives of cooperating action agencies.

Recommendations as to GENERAL EDITORIAL POLICIES AND RELATIONSHIPS:

1. In view of the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture last fall, which provided for integration of the older bureaus with the newer action agencies having to do with agricultural adjustment, marketing, land use, conservation of resources, and carrying the Department to the farmer, there should be complete cooperation and coordination of all informational agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture, including action agencies, and the Extension Information Divisions of the respective Land-Grant Colleges to avoid duplication of press releases, radio talks, visual aids, discussion materials, and other informational material.

2. Knowing that the Department desires to obtain the fullest and most practical use of its several programs for serving the farmer and the farm family, it would appear desirable that full resources of the Land-Grant Colleges and farmer cooperation should be brought into the picture. It is therefore advised that subject-matter content of information materials from all informational agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture, insofar as they affect a given State or a given area within a State, should be cleared in the States concerned through the Land-Grant College technical staffs and subject-matter field men and Extension Information Divisions of the respective Extension Services, before release. Whenever there is evident discrepancy or disagreement between the State and Departmental authorities on subject-matter material, these will be reviewed and an agreement reached before release. (When informational materials are received by the Extension editor, it shall be his duty to see that such subject matter as contained within all such releases be cleared by the Extension Service subject-matter specialists to be in conformity with the recommendations of the States' Research Staffs).

3. Informational materials originating in the field, i.e.,

- (a) State and regional should be cleared through State Extension Information Division for release.
- (b) Community, county, and district, should be cleared with the county Extension Service office before release.

4. It is recommended that the same procedure be followed in handling publicity for the 4-H Club Congress as is followed in connection with the National 4-H Club Encampment, which is in line with the general policy as outlined above. (Specifically, this would include a review and approval by the Extension Service, of all informational plans and news releases involved between contest sponsors and the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work. This procedure should also apply to any other groups or organizations.)

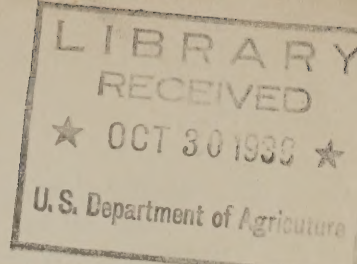
5. It is further recommended that all informational contacts, correspondence and otherwise, from the State Extension Information Divisions to the Federal Information Services be routed through the Division of Extension Information of the Federal Extension Service.

Respectfully submitted.

Subcommittee:

L. L. Longsdorf, Kansas, Chairman,
A. J. Sims, Tennessee,
F. J. Keilholz, Illinois,
I. G. Kinghorn, Colorado,
Bruce Miner, Maine.

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REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL INFORMATION MATERIALS

This committee takes the position that there is a need for a wider distribution of information which would tell, in popular form, of the contributions being made nationally by the Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics and for making fuller use of national and regional magazines and news, feature and picture services as extension educational media.

It was twenty-five years ago that the Smith-Lever bill was enacted, and since that time the Extension Service has contributed notably to the advancement of agriculture and rural life. Farmers and their leaders are cognizant of the important role played by Extension in rural life, as are countless thousands of rural women. Yet the fact remains that the public at large has little understanding of Extension work.

The magazine Fortune, a few months ago, published an illuminating article on the county agent and his associates. That article told the story of Extension work to a large group of business and industrial leaders; it interpreted the Extension Service for a substantial body of persons whose primary interest, it may be safely assumed, was not in farming or in an agricultural agency established by the Government to serve the farmer and his family.

There should be more such articles published on the Extension Service by magazines and other publications of general circulation, in the opinion of this committee. A substantial appropriation is made by the Congress every year for the support of Extension work, and information on the contributions of the Service, presented from the national viewpoint, could well serve as an accounting of the funds--State and County as well as Federal--used in this cooperative, educational program. Furthermore, the significance of the Extension Service as an educational agency should be explained to the public at large.

This committee recommends, therefore, the adoption of a policy which calls for a national program of information by the Federal Extension Service in national and regional magazines, news services, etc. Establishment of such a program involves two major steps.

The first calls for the assembly and appraisal of the work of the Extension Service as it functions in 48 States. The second calls for the dissemination of information which would truly reflect Extension contributions to the improvement of farm and rural life.

The first step - appraising Extension contributions - is something that has always been done by the Federal office of Extension as a matter of policy. Administrators and supervisors in this Washington office know of Extension's progress in the 48 States through their perusal of reports from the several States, field trips, conferences, and by other means.

In effect, then, the facts called for in this report are in a large measure already assembled in the Federal office of Extension. It is an open question, however, as to whether these facts are consistently appraised from the standpoint of their value to the better magazines of general circulation, press associations and syndicates, picture magazines and other media in which the functions and activities of the Extension Service might well be told. That there should be a consistent appraisal of Extension activities from this standpoint is obvious.

Therefore, this committee recommends that the Federal office of Extension provide someone in its Information Division to be responsible for this activity.

That State Extension editors would cooperate in the proposed program can, in the committee's opinion, be taken for granted, and the committee recommends that the desired cooperation be established.

State Extension editors are in a position to forward to Washington statements on such Extension work in their respective States as appears to be potentially good material for a national information program.

Obtaining national circulation of Extension stories, in the committee's opinion, calls for the establishment of closer working relationships with magazines of general circulation, press associations, syndicates, and other such media.

The key man in the establishment of this proposed working relationship would be the person designated by the Federal office of Extension. It would be his responsibility to suggest to the editors, magazines, and press associations the desirability of carrying national extension stories. In the main, it would not be his responsibility to write the copy. Rather, he would lay before the editors the salient facts of suggested stories on the assumption that much of the writing would be done by staff members of or free-lance writers for the publication for which the story or stories are suggested.

Under this plan of operation, therefore, the Federal office of Extension would be expected to establish close relationships with such media as follows:

1. Magazines of general circulation, such as the Saturday Evening Post and Collier's.
2. Picture magazines, such as Life and Look.
3. Press associations and syndicates.
4. Metropolitan papers. Here working relationships should be established with editors of special departments, as well as news editors.

in effect, the local office in the region are in a large measure already included in the Federal office of Extension. It is an open question, however, as to whether these local are consistently maintained from the standpoint of their value to the better management of general extension, given consideration and organization. Extension activities and other matters in which the Federal and activities of the Extension Service might be held. That there should be a constant approval of Extension activities from the standpoint of extension.

Therefore, this committee recommends that the Federal office of Extension also provide assistance to the Extension Division in its responsibility for this activity.

That State Extension offices would cooperate in the proposed program and in the committee's opinion be taken for granted, and the committee recommends that the nearest cooperation be established.

That Extension offices are to be qualified to forward to Washington statements on matters connected with the Extension Service as appears to be particularly good material for a national Extension program.

Regarding national extension of Extension activities, in the committee's opinion, while the establishment of closer working relationships with Extension of general extension, given consideration, evaluation, and other work matter.

The key man in the establishment of this proposed working relationship will be the person designated by the Federal office of Extension. It would be his responsibility to extend to the other, extension, and given consideration the desirability of carrying national extension activities. In the main, it would not be his responsibility to write the copy. Extension is a field and before the others the national work of suggested program or the suggested that work of the writer would be done by staff members of the Extension Service for the position for which the staff or other are suggested.

Under this plan of operation, therefore, the Federal office of Extension also would be expected to establish close relationships with each office as follows:

1. Extension of general extension, such as the Saturday Evening Post and similar.
2. Extension magazines, such as Life and Look.
3. Extension activities and extension.
4. Extension papers. These working relationships should be established with offices of special departments, as well as new offices.

5. The farm papers of national circulation.
6. Trade papers.
7. House organs of farm and home groups.
8. Program directors and educational directors for radio networks.

It is the committee's considered opinion that Extension work throughout the 48 States can provide worth-while material for all the foregoing media. The problem is nothing more than one of assembling the material from the States, casting it in its proper national perspective, and then calling it to the attention of editors and radio executives who are in a position to make use of it.

The committee again wishes to emphasize the importance of placing the responsibility for this work on one person in the Federal office of Extension. State Extension editors can be counted on to cooperate in the proposed program, but responsibility for the program must be fixed in one person.

The committee further recommends that Extension Services in the several States give increased attention to the building of high-quality programs as they are invited to participate in the National Farm and Home Hour and other network, radio programs. It is the committee's belief that in too many instances the Extension contributions have not measured up to the standards expected of network programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Subcommittee:

Wallace S. Moreland, New Jersey, Chairman,
Bentley Mackay, Louisiana,
C. A. Bond, Washington,
E. H. Rohrbeck, Pennsylvania,
T. R. Johnston, Indiana,
G. S. Butts, New York.

